

**Terminal Evaluation of the Fifth Operational Phase of the
GEF Small Grants Program in Brazil**
- BRA 12/G32 / PIMS 4578
IC 32046/2018

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CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION	11
1.1. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation	11
1.2. Scope and Methodology of Terminal Evaluation	12
1.3. Structure of the Evaluation Report	18
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT	19
2.1. Project start and duration	19
2.2. Problems that the Project sought to address	19
2.3. Immediate and development objectives of the Project	19
2.4. Objective's indicators established for baseline and for target to the end of the Project 20	
2.5. Main stakeholders	22
2.6. Expected Results	23
3. FINDINGS	23
3.1. Project Design/ Formulation	24
a. Project Design	24
b. Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)	24
c. Assumptions and Risks	24
d. Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design	25
e. Planned stakeholder participation	26
f. Replication approach	26
g. UNDP comparative advantage	26
h. Linkages between program and other interventions within the sector	26
i. Management arrangements	27
3.2. Project implementation	28
a. Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation):	28
b. Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region):	28
c. Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management	29
d. Project Finance:	30
e. Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation	33
f. UNDP and Execution Partner implementation / execution coordination, and operational issues	33
3.3. Project Results	34
a. Overall results (attainment of objectives):	35
b. Relevance	37
c. Effectiveness & Efficiency	37
d. Country ownership	37
e. Mainstreaming	37
f. Sustainability	40
g. Impact	40
4. CONCLUSIONS, RECCOMENDATIONS AND LESSONS	42
4.1. Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Project	42
4.2. Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the program	43
4.3. Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives	44
4.4. Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success	47

4.5.	<i>Lessons Learnt</i>	47
5.	ANNEXES	49

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brazil is known worldwide as one of the most important countries in terms of biological diversity. The Amazon, the Atlantic Forest and, on a similar scale, the Pantanal have received the most international and national attention. On the other hand, the Cerrado, Caatinga and the Southern Grasslands have been practically ignored in Brazil and internationally until recently.

The Cerrado is the most biodiverse savannah in the world, while Caatinga is the largest dry forest in South America and certainly one of the richest dry forests in the world.

Among the various threats faced by the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes, land use change – where native vegetation and traditional community-managed areas are substituted by large-scale cropland, eucalyptus monoculture and pasture. Land use change in the Cerrado is the biggest single source of GHG emissions in Brazil.

The Project was designed to secure Global Environment Benefits through community-based initiatives and actions for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and maintenance of carbon stocks in the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes.

Immediate objectives:

- Biodiversity conservation in the production landscape through community-based sustainable resource use and management of natural resources;
- Maintenance of carbon stocks through avoidance of land use change and improved agriculture and forest management at the community level;
- Implementation of sustainable land management techniques that prevent land degradation, restore agro-ecosystem services, and improve livelihoods of local communities;
- Capacity development and knowledge management to help communities deliver global environmental benefits.

The Project's period of implementation was from May 2nd, 2013 (date of ProDoc signature) to December 31st, 2016 with an extension endorsed by the SGP Brazil National Steering Committee, and approved by de UNDP – GEF Executive Coordinator, until November 2018.

The portfolio under evaluation is of 101 projects that have been or are being executed under SGP between years 2013-2018 aimed at guaranteeing global environmental benefits through community initiatives and actions for conservation, biodiversity sustainable management and the maintenance of carbon stock in Cerrado and Caatinga biomes.

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	TARGET END OF PROJECT	ACHIEVEMENT RATING
Project Objective: Conservation of the <i>Cerrado</i> and <i>Caatinga</i> biomes of Brazil through community initiatives on sustainable resource use, and actions that maintain or enhance carbon stocks and increase areas under sustainable land	Increased area in production landscapes meeting sustainability standards with enhanced biodiversity conservation	Additional 300,000 ha sustainably managed in the <i>Cerrado</i> ecosystem 100,000 ha in the <i>Caatinga</i> ecosystem Sustainability criteria and standards developed and adapted to social and environmental conditions of <i>Cerrado</i> and <i>Caatinga</i>	Partially Achieved
	Carbon stocks maintained	500 hectares of Caatinga	Achieved

management	or increased through maintenance and expansion of habitats	<p>ecosystem restored, equivalent to 18,200 tCO₂e sequestered</p> <p>500 hectares of Cerrado ecosystem restored, equivalent to 37,400 tCO₂e sequestered during life of project</p> <p>80,000 hectares with avoided conversion to pasture or monoculture and environmental services maintained, equivalent to 4,370,400 tCO₂e of emissions avoided during the life of the project</p>	
	Increased area of sustainable land management techniques that sustain the flow of environmental services in agro-ecosystems by communities supported by SGP	<p>An additional 200 hectares in <i>Caatinga</i> and 400 hectares in the <i>Cerrado</i> in which communities apply innovative soil management techniques</p> <p>2,000 hectares with improved ecosystem services as a result of community adoption of innovative water management techniques</p>	Achieved

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	TARGET END OF PROJECT	ACHIEVEMENT RATING
Outcome 1: Sustainable use and management of natural resources by communities to enhance conservation of biodiversity in the production landscape	Number of sustainable land use plans or resource use plans developed, as well as plans for conservation of endangered species	15 plans developed by stakeholders	Achieved
	Number of native plant and animal species considered endangered or important for sustainable livelihoods conserved in-situ and sustainably used	50 plant species and 25 animal species, including <i>Cerrado</i> and <i>Caatinga</i>	Achieved
	<u>ORIGINAL INDICATOR</u> Number of families participating in <i>Caatinga</i> and <i>Cerrado</i> bio-products marketing	5,000 families generating income through marketing of biodiversity products. <u>REDEFINED TARGET</u>	Achieved

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	TARGET END OF PROJECT	ACHIEVEMENT RATING
	networks <u>REDEFINED INDICATOR</u> Number of families generating income through marketing of biodiversity products.		
	Number of hectares with forest cover under regeneration in community lands	1,000 additional hectares under natural regeneration practices	Achieved
Outcome 2: Carbon stocks maintained through avoiding land use change and improved agriculture and forest management at the community level	Number of hectares under sustainable forest management in community lands	40,000 additional hectares under sustainable forest management	Achieved
	Area under ecological agriculture management	15,000 hectares under ecological agriculture management <u>REDEFINED TARGET</u> 3,000 has under ecological agriculture management	Not achieved yet
	Area on which small holders apply fire control techniques or avoid use of fire	Smallholders apply fire control techniques or avoid the use of fire on at least 25,000 hectares	Achieved
	Number of families adopting sustainable water management techniques and sustainable land management techniques	1,200 additional families have adopted sustainable water management techniques and sustainable land management techniques	Achieved
Outcome 3: Sustainable land management techniques preventing land degradation, restoring agro-ecosystem services, and improving livelihoods of local communities implemented	Area with erosion in grantee farmlands	Reduction of erosion in 1,200 ha as a result of SGP interventions	Achieved
	Area under sustainable water and soil management	2,000 ha (including both <i>Caatinga</i> and <i>Cerrado</i>)	Achieved
Outcome 4: Communities deliver global environmental benefits through capacity development and knowledge management	Percentage of project reports that receive a “very good” score, according to SGP Brazil project assessment method	70% of project reports “very good”	Achieved
	Number of community leaders aware of global environmental issues	150 additional community leaders	Achieved
	Number of policy inputs or	10 additional inputs or recommendations	Achieved

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR	TARGET END OF PROJECT	ACHIEVEMENT RATING
	recommendations provided to policymakers based on lessons learned		

The TE was conducted in accordance with the guidelines, rules and procedures established by UNDP¹ and GEF, reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guide for evaluation of projects funded by the GEF², and in the contract's ToRs.

GEF-SGP Brazil's TE aims to evaluate the development results and potential effects of the project, that is, the final compliance of its objectives in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability. The strategic actions carried out by the counterparts, which have substantially contributed to the compliance of the project's objectives, was identified and rated.

All pertinent sources of information were considered such as project's documents and reports, institutional and legal documents, national strategic and legal documents, interviews with executive organization, implementing partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries and field mission to project sites.

The results obtained during the project's execution were analyzed and documented, and the achieved impacts, sustainability and lessons was determined. Also, a feedback with conclusions and recommendations to the executors and beneficiaries of the implemented actions was delivered, jointly with a set of tools for the government decision makers, UNDP team, government officers, civil society and other key stakeholders, regarding the future implementation of this line of programs and considerations for their future design in further operations.

The Terminal Evaluation used the **criteria** of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact as expected in the ToRs.

Overall results and evaluation criteria were rated as shown in the following tables:

Outcomes	Rate:
Outcome 1: Conservation of the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes through community initiatives on sustainable resource use in productive landscapes	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
Outcome 2: Maintenance of carbon stock, avoiding land use change and improved agricultural and forest management at the community level	Satisfactory (S)
Outcome 3: Sustainable land management techniques preventing degradation, restoring agro ecosystem services, and improving livelihoods of local communities implemented	Satisfactory (S)

¹ UNEG 2005. Norms for Evaluation in the UN System. See: <http://www.unevaluation.org/unegnorms>

² UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. 2012. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>

Outcomes	Rate:
Outcome 4: Communities deliver global environmental benefits through capacity development and knowledge management	Highly Satisfactory (HS)

Criteria	Rate	Comments
Relevance	R	The project is relevant to the main objectives of the GEF focal areas and environmental and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels.
Effectiveness	HS	The results and expected objectives of the project have been achieved in a highly satisfactory way.
Efficiency	HS	The project was implemented in a highly satisfactory way, in-line with international and national norms and standards.
Sustainability	L	The sustainability is considered likely given the moderates financial risks, and low socioeconomic, institutional and governance, and environmental risks to maintain long-term project results.
Impact	S	The impact is significant and there are indications that the project has contributed to progress towards reducing environmental stress and improving the ecological state.
Outcomes	HS	The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
M&E	HS	
I&E	HS	

III. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABC	Brazil's Cooperation Agency
APR	Annual Project Report
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCF	Country Cooperation Framework
CCM	Climate Change Mitigation
CDB	Convention of Biological Diversity
CO	Country Office
CONECTA	National Landscape Connectivity Program
CP	Country Program
CPM	SGP Country Program Manager
CPAP	Country Program Action Plan
CPMT	Central Program Management Team, SGP-UNDP
CPS	Country Program Strategy
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EA	Executing Agency
FSP	Full Size Project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Green House Gases
has	Hectares
IA	Implementing Agency
ISPNI	Instituto Sociedade, População e Natureza
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid Term Evaluation
NC	SGP National Coordination Team
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	National Steering Committee
OP	Operation Phase
PCTAF	Traditional People and Communities and Family Farmers
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PRODOC	Project Document
PPR	Project Progress Reports
QRP	Quarterly Project Review
RR	Resident Representative
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

1. INTRODUCTION

This document aims to present the results of the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of **Fifth Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Program in Brazil (BRA 12/G32 / PIMS 4578)**.

1.1. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The TE was conducted in accordance with the guidelines, rules and procedures established by UNDP³ and GEF, reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guide for evaluation of projects funded by the GEF⁴, and in the contract's ToRs.

GEF-SGP Brazil's TE aims to evaluate the development results and potential effects of the project, that is, the final compliance of its objectives in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and sustainability. The strategic actions carried out by the counterparts, which have substantially contributed to the compliance of the project's objectives, was identified and rated.

Also, a collaborative and participative approach were encouraged during the TE development. In this context, the consultancy's purpose is to evaluate the achievement of the objectives and results of the GEF SGP regarding the work plan and the respective annual plans endorsed by the Project's Steering Committee and the UNDP.

The results obtained during the project's execution was analyzed and documented, and the achieved impacts, sustainability and lessons was determined. Also, a feedback with conclusions and recommendations to the executors and beneficiaries of the implemented actions was delivered, jointly with a set of tools for the government decision makers, UNDP team, government officers, civil society and other key stakeholders, regarding the future implementation of this line of programs and considerations for their future design in further operations.

The Terminal Evaluation of the PBRA 12/G32/PIMS 4578 project focuses on:

- Evaluating the results for the development and potential effects of GEF's SGP Brazil 5th Operational Phase.
- Identifying and rate counterpart's strategic actions that have substantially contributed to achieving the Project's objectives.

The portfolio under evaluation is of 101 projects that have been or are being executed under SGP between years 2013-2018 aimed at guaranteeing global environmental benefits through community initiatives and actions for conservation, biodiversity sustainable management and the maintenance of carbon stock in Cerrado and Caatinga biomes.

As in every TE, the following complementary purposes were considered:

- a) promote accountability and transparency at evaluating and reveling the program's progress in the compliance of its achievements.;
- b) identify the main lessons that can be disseminated among relevant GEF's programs and that can contribute to improve the selection, design and implementation of future UNDP/ GEF initiatives, and
- c) deliver feedback and observations regarding key issues that are recurrent in the portfolio that may require attention and are susceptible of improvement.

³ UNEG 2005. Norms for Evaluation in the UN System. See: <http://www.unevaluation.org/uneqn norms>

⁴ UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. 2012. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from the SGP Brazil Country Programme, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

All the project's execution phases, from May 2013 to May 2018 were evaluated.

1.2. Scope and Methodology of Terminal Evaluation

The Project was evaluated by a multiple methodology following in detail the ToRs proposal. Therefore, the methodology included documents review, interviews, focal groups, observation from projects site visits and participation in the SGP Lessons and Experiences Seminar for information triangulation and its further analysis. The questionnaire for interviews and focal groups has been designed considering the UNDP and GEF's evaluation frameworks, following the different staged of analysis.

The methodological approach is based on the following principles:

- Participative principle: during the whole evaluation process, but mainly during the validation of findings and conclusions, the evaluation was participative and should also identify the key stakeholders and involved communities' engagement. The evaluation will count with the participation of authorities and civil society organization's leaders. On the other hand, the evaluator will aim to ensure the existence of several sources in order to achieve equitable access to the participation process in such way that all stakeholders can assess the Project's design, implementation and results.
- Gender and human rights principle: focus is on the individual, and from this scheme, the evaluation is orientated towards the protection and enhancement of human capacities and life quality. Subjects are considered as actors and not as passive receptors and, in this sense, their opinions are considered in interviews as well as focus groups and in reviews of the documents that have been produced by them. The different opportunities that men and women have, the existing relations they have and the different roles that are socially assigned were considered and how these have influenced in the achievement of the results expected by the Project. Qualitative and quantitative information regarding gender, youth and indigenous people were included.
- Theory of change principle: *relates to the analysis of the Project's chain of results, which should be based on an orderly and sequential interpretation between assumptions and change generating results. A critical reasoning is applied to the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives and projects that aim to foster change in their contexts. The following elements were considered: Project context; long term changes that effects aim to achieve or whom have they benefit; envisaged change process/sequence to achieve the expected long-term results; assumptions on how these changes may occur, as a way to verify if activities and products are adequate to induce changes in the desired direction in this context.*
- Knowledge management principle: the evaluation was orientated to recover experiences that promote lessons for the executers and partners within Brazil's context or that may generate replicable lessons.

The Terminal Evaluation used the **criteria** of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact as expected in the ToRs.

Evaluation criteria and evaluation scales to be adopted⁵

1. **Relevance:** How does the Project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal areas, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?
2. **Effectiveness:** To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the Project been achieved?
3. **Efficiency:** Was the Project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?
4. **Sustainability:** To what extent are there financial, socio-economic and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term Project results?
5. **Impact:** Are there indications that the Project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?

Rating scales for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution

- 6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): The Project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
- 5: Satisfactory (S): There were only minor shortcomings.
- 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were moderate shortcomings.
- 3: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The Project had significant shortcomings.
- 2: Unsatisfactory (U): There were major shortcomings in the achievement of Project objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
- 1: Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The Project had severe shortcomings.

Rating scale for Sustainability:

4. Likely (L): Negligible risks to sustainability.
3. Moderately likely (ML): Moderate risks.
2. Moderately unlikely (UM): Significant risks.
1. Unlikely (U): Severe risks.

Rating scale for Relevance:

2. Relevant (R).
1. Not Relevant (NR).

Rating scale for Impact:

3. Significant (S).
2. Minimal (M).
1. Negligible (N).

⁵ UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. 2012.
<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>

Additional ratings when relevant:

Not applicable (N/A).

Unable to assess (U/A).

General activities are described in an applied manner and based in the achievement of the TE's products:

1. Identification and review based on evidence from all the pertinent information sources:

It includes participating key stakeholders (individuals and groups), implemented experiences and documents developed during the Project's design and implementation.

This first stage corresponds to the desk study phase: it establishes the stakeholders map; institutional and legal Projects documents (See **Annex 5**) are analyzed in order to become familiar with the guidelines and the institutional and legal framework.

The evaluator reviewed all relevant sources of information, such as the Project document, Project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, Project budget revisions, Midterm Review (MTR), progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, Project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful.

Also, during this stage, inception meetings were held with the executive organization and UNDP CO Brazil and the UNDP GEF Global Coordinator for the SGP Upgraded Country Program, in order to agree the approach on the following:

- a- Accurately establish the objective of the present consultancy and become familiar with the institutional context in which it would develop, including sources and conditions of access to information, as well as identifying key sources of information in each of the projects executed in the GEF SGP framework and the implementation regions.
- b- Operationalize the main questions and elaborate the adequate techniques for information gathering.

Questions to be considered during the Terminal Evaluation

Analysis levels	Evaluation criteria	Questions
Design	<p>Pertinence and coherence</p> <p>To which extent are the objectives of a development intervention consistent with the beneficiaries and county's requirements, with global priorities and with the partners and donor's policies?</p>	<p>a) Is the Project aligned with national policies and international agreements signed by Brazil?</p> <p>b) Is the Project aligned with UNDP's strategic plan?</p> <p>c) Is the Project aligned with any other broader plan that includes environmental issues?</p> <p>d) Does the Project clearly define the problem it attempts to solve?</p> <p>e) Are the Project's envisaged strategies and activities, consistent and adequate to achieve the Programs objectives and results?</p> <p>f) In your opinion, which is the Project's actual monitoring and evaluation system's quality?</p> <p>g) Which elements should be enhanced in order to generate the bases that enable the Project's impact evaluation in the future?</p> <p>h) Which practices, developed by one of the Program's activities, have or can contribute to enhance the others within the Project's framework?</p> <p>i) Which lessons are relevant for future similar initiatives?</p>
Management	<p>Efficiency</p> <p>Extent to which resources or inputs (funds, time, human resources) have translated into results.</p>	<p>a) Did the management model enable the achievement of the Project's results?</p> <p>b) Have the adequate coordination levels been undertaken for the achievement of the Program's results?</p> <p>c) Which was the progress of the project in financial terms?</p> <p>d) Which obstacles (barriers) were found? Were budget and resources management an opportunity for new lessons within the involved organizations and for beneficiaries?</p> <p>e) Were products and services delivered to beneficiaries in due course?</p> <p>f) Have the beneficiaries' contributions in the initiative's execution been quantified or made visible (unpaid work, venues, studies, reports, etc.)?</p> <p>g) Are monitoring and report tools applied correctly to capture progress and results achievement? Work has been done under a framework of management based on results?</p> <p>h) Are interventions contemplated in UNDP CO work plan? Has the Project created synergies?</p>
Process Parties' coordination, partnerships	<p>Ownership</p> <p>Process of adaptation, transformation or active reception of outputs and</p>	<p>a) To what extent are stakeholders (government, entities, NGOs and beneficiaries) involved in the intervention's implementation and management?</p> <p>b) What challenges have stakeholders faced to participate?</p> <p>c) How does stakeholders' participation contribute to the Project's sustainability and effectiveness?</p>

Analysis levels	Evaluation criteria	Questions
and participation	changes in the Program	d) Have strategic partnerships been achieved between UNDP Brazil and public institutions in order to enhance the Project's results?
Overall results	Effectiveness	a) To what extent have strategies and planned activities contributed to the achievement of results? b) Which have been the major results and their quality regarding to international standards? c) Which are the major barriers, risks, opportunities and challenges regarding the result's implementation for each component? d) Which instruments were implemented for the coordination of the different parties and stakeholder's work? e) Which were the intervention's partners comparative strengths and how were these developed during implementation? f) Does the intervention specifically consider gender equity, human rights and inter culturality approaches regarding the expected results? g) Which internal and external aspects have influenced the achievement or not of the results? Have other unforeseen effects been achieved?
Specific results	Effectiveness reflect to what extent the Project's specific objective has been achieved, considering the rate of achievements as well as the period of time for doing so. Effectiveness studies the expected results rate as an assimilation or as a product's outcome.	
Results	Sustainability Continuity of a development intervention's benefits on cooperation's termination. Probability of obtaining long term benefits.	a) Can result's continuity be expected after the intervention's implementation? b) Are the installed capacities supporting the conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity? c) Which new skills are required in that direction? d) To which extent has the project contributed to create communication mechanisms (sustainable once the intervention has concluded) among citizens, civil society, and government? e) Have results and outputs been owned? f) What measures related to the areas of the Project have been institutionalized to ensure sustainability of activities/ achievements?

- c- Adjust methodological instruments and data gathering tools, as well as their feasibility for data gathering and process. A survey on available data regarding the universe of participants was undertaken (stakeholders mapping).

The evaluation followed a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, CPMT and RTA, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser/Global Coordinator for the SGP Upgraded Country Programme based in New York and key stakeholders.

Interviews were held with the following organizations and individuals: ISPN (National Host Institution), SGP Country Program Manager, UNDP CO, UCP Global Coordinator, minimum of 4 grantees, minimum of 3 members of the NSC, as well as GEF operational focal point.

2. *Instruments development: surveys and guidelines for interviews:*

The developed questionnaire (in Portuguese) for interviews with key stakeholders is shown in **Annex I**.

3. *Inception Report elaboration (Product 1):*

This report includes the proposed methodology for the development of the TE, a list of interviews, a field mission schedule and the documents to be reviewed for the TE.

The final design was endorsed by UNDP Brazil CO and Program Team ending the desk study phase.

4. *Field missions:*

Visits to Brasília, Pentecoste, Russas and Fortaleza were agreed with Instituto Sociedade, População e Natureza (ISPN) and UNDP Brazil, where interviews and group meetings were undertaken in order to respond to the aspects considered in the TE's scope. (See **Annex 2**).

5. *Contact, collaboration and participation interviews with key stakeholders and pertinent project groups according to UNDP-GEF's M&E Policy:*

Thorough interviews⁶ were undertaken as well as discussion/focal groups⁷, after the approval of the Inception Report by the Program Team and UNDP's CO. This scanning will allow to gather as much information as possible regarding the beneficiaries' opinions and experiences as well as those from key stakeholders that were involved in the project's implementation. If considered necessary, and in order to make the field mission more cost-effective, phone or Skype follow-up to those stakeholders whose thorough interviews could not take place may be developed.

6. *Initial Findings presentation upon mission's completion (Product 2) oral communication of the preliminary results from the interviews.*

⁶ Thorough interviews: Its the qualitative method that will enable to deeply explore subjects. The interview always has two participants: interviewer and interviewee. In this case, no observers will participate, since the can significantly influence in the interviews atmosphere and development. The election of the interviewee is key for this method (for it has to be representative of the study community/group), as well as the quantification of the interviews (in order to weigh the interviewees' samples to the extent of the Project), the development of a questionnaire or guide with key questions (to thoroughly explore every aspect), the interview's framework (provide a place that inspires trust and comfort, so the interviewee can fully express itself). For the development of thorough interviews and focal groups, ISPN team and partners will contribute with the connections with institutional responsible and beneficiaries to coordinate the interviews date, time and place.

⁷ Focal groups: Through this tool, a group is formed (usually between 6 and 12 participants), aiming to analyze emerging issues of group interaction. It is to stand out the concept of the group acting as a unit, for which group activity fosters a dynamic that is not equivalent to the study of its members.

7. Analysis and standardization of the background information, key stakeholder's interviews, and group meetings with Projects stakeholders and beneficiaries review, responses follow up.

8. *Report's development and presentation (draft version) (Product 3).*

9. Revision and inclusion of commentaries to Final Report

Terminal Evaluation Report also will provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

10. Development of Final Report and Executive Summary (Product 4).

1.3. Structure of the Evaluation Report

As required in the ToRs, the evaluator examined and described the quality of Project implementation. Rating items were: (1) key aspects of the Project (2) sustainability, (3) relevance, and (4) impact. The rating was based on scales as per the TE guidelines of UNDP-GEF.

The **key issues** were: (i) conceptualization and design, (ii) stakeholders' participation in the formulation, (iii) implementation approach, (iv) monitoring and evaluation, (v) stakeholders' participation in the implementation, and (vi) achievement of outputs/results and objective.

Each of these aspects was rated according to scales provided in the ToRs, which are detailed in the section Project results – overall results.

The questions of in-depth interviews and focus group guides were oriented by the table on prospects for the evaluation criteria and discussion with those responsible for this study, in addition to the guidelines established in the ToRs.

The TE used the *key criteria for analysis* of evaluation, both for projects and programs, established in the OECD documents (relevance, internal and external coherence, impact/effect, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability); UNDP also applies these criteria to projects funded by the GEF and the principles that consider evaluation as part of the ongoing actions of projects and programs, and not a static external element.

In the analysis of the implementation and achievement of results, the information was considered in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. An analysis of the sustainability was also performed, and a set of recommendations and a summary of lessons learned was drafted. In this sense, the evaluation focused on collecting experiences, good practices and specific knowledge produced during the project implementation, as inputs for organizational learning, and the visibility of practices with local communities and other institutions (**see Annex 6**). The evaluation questions used in the field work were prepared according to the evaluation criteria detailed above (see **Annex 7**).

Lessons learned, and recommendations were prepared in order to improve future projects.

Although UNDP evaluation policy does not require ratings as part of its performance standards, GEF states that ratings should be used to assess the projects funded by GEF. UNDP agreed to rate projects/programs supported by UNDP and funded by GEF by:

Progress toward Results and Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: to assess these aspects, as is stipulated in the Guidelines for TE, uses a scale of 6 (six) points: *Highly Satisfactory (HS)*; *Satisfactory (S)*; *Moderately Satisfactory (MS)*; *Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)*; *Unsatisfactory (U)* and *Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)*.

Sustainability: a scale of 4 (four) points is used: *Likely (L)*; *Moderately Likely (ML)*; *Moderately Unlikely (MU)*; *Unlikely (U)*.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1. Project start and duration

The Project's period of implementation was from May 2nd, 2013 (date of ProDoc signature) to December 31st, 2016 with an extension endorsed by the SGP Brazil National Steering Committee, and approved by de UNDP – GEF Executive Coordinator, until November 2018.

2.2. Problems that the Project sought to address

Brazil is known worldwide as one of the most important countries in terms of biological diversity. The Amazon, the Atlantic Forest and, on a similar scale, the Pantanal have received the most international and national attention. On the other hand, the Cerrado, Caatinga and the Southern Grasslands have been practically ignored in Brazil and internationally until recently.

The Cerrado is the most biodiverse savannah in the world, while Caatinga is the largest dry forest in South America and certainly one of the richest dry forests in the world.

Among the various threats faced by the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes, land use change – where native vegetation and traditional community-managed areas are substituted by large-scale cropland, eucalyptus monoculture and pasture. Land use change in the Cerrado is the biggest single source of GHG emissions in Brazil.

While agricultural expansion in the Cerrado has had a positive impact on the Brazilian economy, the negative effects on the environment and local communities are now significant such as deforestation, landscape fragmentation, dislodging and isolating rural communities, loss of biological diversity, soil and genetic erosion, water sources pollution, among others.

Besides the reduction of their territories, communities are facing water scarcity and soil erosion, and impoverishment, which are the main reasons for rural exodus in the Caatinga and for unsustainable use of natural resources. A large area of the Caatinga is ranked today as highly threatened by desertification.

2.3. Immediate and development objectives of the Project

The Project was designed to *secure Global Environment Benefits through community-based initiatives and actions for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and maintenance of carbon stocks in the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes.*

Immediate objectives:

- Biodiversity conservation in the production landscape through community-based sustainable resource use and management of natural resources;

- Maintenance of carbon stocks through avoidance of land use change and improved agriculture and forest management at the community level;
- Implementation of sustainable land management techniques that prevent land degradation, restore agro-ecosystem services, and improve livelihoods of local communities;
- Capacity development and knowledge management to help communities deliver global environmental benefits.

2.4. Objective's indicators established for baseline and for target to the end of the Project

Objective	Indicator	Baseline	Target at the end of the Project
Conservation of the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes of Brazil through community initiatives on sustainable resource use, and actions that maintain or enhance carbon stocks and increase areas under sustainable land management.	Increased area in production landscapes meeting sustainability standards with enhanced biodiversity conservation.	200000 hectares managed sustainability as a result of SGP support in OP4.	Additional 300000 ha managed sustainably in the Cerrado ecosystem. 100000 ha in the Caatinga ecosystem. Sustainability criteria and standards developed and adapted to social and environmental conditions of Cerrado and Caatinga.
	Carbon stocks maintained or increased through maintenance and expansion of habitats.	Deforestation rate in the Caatinga biome is 276300 has/pa and 1418000 ha/pa in the Cerrado.	500 ha of Caatinga ecosystem restored, equivalent to 18200 tCO ₂ e sequestered during the life of the program. 500 ha of Cerrado ecosystem restored, equivalent to 37400 tCO ₂ e sequestered during the life of the program. 80000 has with avoided conversion to pasture or monoculture and environmental services maintained, equivalent to 4370400 tCO ₂ e of

Objective	Indicator	Baseline	Target at the end of the Project
			emissions avoided during the life of the program.
	Increased area of sustainable land management techniques that sustain the flow of environmental services in agro ecosystems by communities supported by SGP.	2200 has (as a result of SGP support in OP4)	An additional 200 has in Caatinga and 400 has in the Cerrado in which communities apply innovative soil management techniques. 2000 has with improved ecosystem services as a result of community adoption of innovative water management techniques.
Sustainable use and management of natural resources by communities to enhance conservation of biodiversity in the production landscape.	Number of sustainable land use plans or resources use plans developed, as well as plans for conservation of endangered species.	There are no existing plans in targeted communities.	15 plans developed by stakeholders.
	Number of native plant and animal species considered endangered or important for sustainable livelihoods conserved in – situ and sustainably used.	29 endangered plant species, 6 endangered and 16 vulnerable animal species in program areas supported previously by SGP in Cerrado and 0 plant or animal species in Caatinga.	50 plant species and 25 animal species, including Cerrado and Caatinga.
	Number of families participating in Caatinga and Cerrado bio-products marketing networks.	6000 families currently participate.	8000 additional families participate.
	Number of hectares with forest cover under regeneration in community lands.	612 has currently under regeneration.	1000 additional has under natural regeneration practices.
Carbon stocks maintained through avoiding land use change and improved	Number of has under sustainable forest management in the community level.	36190 has under sustainable forest management (in projects supported in OP4).	40000 additional has under sustainable forest management.
	Area under ecological agriculture management.	250 has (estimated).	15000 has under ecological

Objective	Indicator	Baseline	Target at the end of the Project
agriculture and forest management in the community level.			agriculture management.
	Area on which smallholders apply fire control techniques or avoid use of fire.	Smallholders do not currently apply fire control techniques or avoid use of fire.	Smallholders apply fire control techniques or avoid use of fire on at least 25000 hectares.
	Number of families adopting sustainable water management techniques and sustainable land management techniques.	517 families have adopted sustainable water management techniques and SLM techniques as a result of the SGP support in OP4.	1200 additional families have adopted sustainable water management techniques and SLM techniques.
Sustainable land management techniques preventing land degradation, restoring agro ecosystems services, and improving livelihoods of local communities implemented.	Area with erosion in grantee farmlands.	2400 ha of grantee farmland undergoing erosion, to be confirmed through project submissions.	Reduction of erosion in 1200 ha as a result of SGP interventions.
	Area under sustainable water and soil management.	1200 ha in the Cerrado.	2000 ha including Caatinga and the Cerrado.
Communities deliver global environmental benefits through capacity development and knowledge management.	Percentage of reports that receive a “very good” score, according to SGP Brazil program.	51% “very good” scores.	70% of projects reports with “very good” scores.

2.5. Main stakeholders

The main stakeholders of the Project are: local communities from the Caatinga and Cerrado areas, which designed and implemented projects under the SGP guidelines. GEF-SGP partners are associations, cooperatives, CBOs, syndicates and NGOs that represent or assist local communities that comprise CSOs representative of indigenous peoples, quilombolas and traditional communities. The Cerrado Network (Rede Cerrado) and the Semi-Arid Articulation (ASA) organization are special stakeholders because they articulate CBOs and NGOs of these biomes. They are represented in the NSC and contribute to disseminate information on GEF-SGP. Other important stakeholder is Cerrado Central which is a network that congregates several initiatives

and works with marketing of Cerrado and Caatinga products including special initiatives like a store in Sao Paulo. Cerrado Central was created as a result of the GEF-SGP Brazil work, and was formalized as a cooperative in 2010, being able to access formal markets and new possibilities of financial support.

ISPN has a close relationship with the University of Brasília, which is especially important for GEF-SGP's knowledge management activities and products, it has representatives in the NSC. Partnerships with the private sector were explored mainly in gastronomy. The syndicates, such as STTRR (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras Rurais de Russas) played a very important role in providing technical assistance and critical information to the families in Caatinga and Cerrado.

Cooperation with local and national government institutions is fundamental to turn pilot experiences into public policies. It started by effort of different organizations but is not part of a systematic approach⁸.

2.6. Expected Results

Outcome 1: Conservation of the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes through community initiatives on sustainable resource use in productive landscapes.

Outcome 2: Maintenance of carbon stock, avoiding land use change and improved agricultural and forest management at the community level.

Outcome 3: Sustainable land management techniques preventing degradation, restoring agro ecosystem services, and improving live hoods of local communities implemented.

Outcome 4: Communities deliver global environmental benefits through capacity development and knowledge management.

3. FINDINGS

To complete the analysis, key stakeholders where interviewed, incorporating their vision into the analytical process of strengths and weaknesses. In this sense, the object was getting to know precisely how the Project has operated from the perspective of the stakeholders involved, as well as inquire about the impact it has generated in Brazil.

This perspective has been obtained from interviews and workshops with officials and experts, members of the ISPN team, representatives of UNDP and representatives of NGOs, and involved communities and has carried out the triangulation between the perspective of the interviewees and the documentation analysis. This practice considers both the information from documents and interviews to get a weighed balance of all the sources of information.

The field mission, which allowed the realization of face-to-face interviews and observation of the projects communities, has taken place between May 1 and 11, 2018; interviews via Skype continued between May 12th until May 25th, 2018

The outcomes of the activities carried out by the consultancy, whose strategy and construction of data collection were defined in the relevant report, are described below.

The specific objectives of this section of the evaluation were:

- a. Become familiar with the key stakeholder's perspective on the Project;

⁸ Based on the description made in midterm review (MTR) of the fifth operational phase of the GEF SPG Brazil.

- b. Investigate the relevance and coherence of the Project, particularly if it meets the final objectives;
- c. Investigate whether the mechanisms and instruments are efficient and effective in their purposes, especially:
 - The effectiveness and efficiency of activities,
 - The quality, quantity and acceptability of benefits received,
 - The likely impacts;
- d. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Project;
- e. Investigate best practices and lessons learned;
- f. Know the degree of ownership of key stakeholders; and
- g. Know the vision of the key stakeholders about the sustainability of the proposed activities.

3.1. Project Design/ Formulation

a. Project Design

Relevance of the Project design was analyzed to assess the relevance and coherence between the standards, objectives, measures and means that govern and guide the action. The extent to which the Project's objectives are consistent with the needs and interests of individuals and the needs of Brazil and Objectives of the GEF was considered.

b. Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)

The Project's Logical Framework and its indicators were analyzed to review achievement of results, regarding their coherence, pertinence and probability, and can be easily reviewed for updating targets in future SGP projects. Sixteen indicators (2017 PIR) were analyzed: 3 for Objective, 4 for Outcome 1, 4 for Outcome 2; 2 for Outcome 3, and 3 for Outcome 4; as well as the Base Line established on 2012 and the final targets set for 2018. It includes some indicators disaggregated by gender, but it could be very productive information to have a complete idea of the impact to have these same indicators disaggregated by ethnic origin and age, including disaggregating data for heads of households.

c. Assumptions and Risks

According to the Project Document (2013) five factors were recognized as main risks at the beginning of the program:

- 1- Under performance risk due to the Project management capacity limitations of the CBOs (low risk);
- 2- Geographical expansion to the Caatinga biome may pose logistical capacity challenges to the GEF-SGP team (low risk);
- 3- Access to markets for sustainably produced goods and services (medium risk);
- 4- Difficulty in assessing and monitoring carbon stocks (medium risk); and
- 5- Communities' resistance to change current agricultural or natural resource use practice (medium risk).

For each of these factors, the corresponding mitigation measures proposed were analyzed according to the risk matrix:

RISK and Assumptions	RISK RATING	MITIGATION MEASURES
Under performance risks due to project management capacity limitations of CBOs	Low	GEF-SGP Brazil will help develop CBO capacity through workshops that will bring together representatives of all approved projects to discuss project management including: responsibilities, work plan and budget revision, financial and activity reports, participatory monitoring, indicators, etc. Also the workshops will enable exchange among grantees for peer-to-peer learning processes. The NHI constant and close monitoring of the projects is also an effective strategy to mitigate execution risks.
Geographical expansion to the Caatinga biome may pose logistical and	Low	To minimize this risk, ISPN has already made contact with important stakeholders and networks in the Caatinga to support GEF-SGP's work and help mobilize co-financing. ISPN has already invited a representative from Semi-Arid Articulation (a well-known local NGO) to

capacity challenges to the GEF-SGP team		participate in the NSC, as well as other specialists who will join the NSC at the beginning of the project. For the first call for proposals in 2013, an ISPN communication assistant will work for a six-month period disseminating information about the GEF-SGP programme and announcing the call for proposals in the Caatinga.
Access to markets for sustainably produced goods and services	Medium	As mentioned in Section B, there are significant challenges involved in marketing and obtaining a fair price for sustainably produced goods and services.
Difficulty in assessing and monitoring carbon stocks	Medium	GEF-SGP is assessing the possibility of partnering with the GEF Carbon Benefits Project to use the tools and methods being developed for measuring and monitoring carbon. At the beginning of the project, a consultant will assist in establishing baseline information for the two ecosystems and will advise the country team in the monitoring method. It will use official data and consider the specificities of different kinds of projects in the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes. Project beneficiaries will be trained on the application of the method to enable them to collect the information. During the project's monitoring, the ISPN team will assess the quality of information provided by the beneficiaries.
Communities' resistance to change current agricultural or natural resource use practices	Medium	Resistance to change is a common human trait. GEF-SGP will address this issue by inviting previous grantees to share their experience and to demonstrate the environmental and socio-economic benefits achieved. It will also work with young leaders within the communities who are often more open to engage in new activities and to take moderate risks.

d. Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design

Being implemented for over 25 years, the design of this phase for SGP Brazil has incorporated a vast amount of lessons learnt from field work.

Also, GEF-SGP Brazil, has maintained close dialogue with the World Bank and various stakeholders of the Pilot Program to Conserve the Brazilian Rainforest. Building on this experience, mainly in the Amazon, the many lessons learned can now be applied to initiatives in other biomes. GEF –SGP has followed the implementation of the Amazon Region Protected Areas (ARPA), a large GEF FSP, to learn about way to demarcate areas for sustainable use, in addition to reinforce conservation. GEF-SGP Brazil contributed to and participated in the preparation of the Sustainable Cerrado Plan, signed with the Ministry of Environment, two state governments, FUNBIO and the Chico Mendes Institute in 2010.

Also, GEF-SGP National Coordinator participated in two events of the UNEP sponsored “The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity” (TEEB) project, including meetings with its coordinator, and learnt of that experience to continue that in the Brazilian version.

e. Planned stakeholder participation

Most interviewees emphasized communities and their members being engaged since the beginning of the Project. Different CSOs networks were invited through NSC and ISPN to disseminate the guidelines for stakeholder's participation.

The relationship between ISPN and local communities was planned with a participatory approach in mind, which was reflected in the design of the project. In this sense, and based on the evidence provided by the field visits and interviews, it becomes clear that there is a close communication between the National Coordination and its partners at different levels, both local CBOs and NGOs and other partner organizations (civil, local Governments, etc.).

f. Replication approach

SGP Brazil has a replication and knowledge management strategy among the organizations that develop common tools. At PPP-ECOS 23th year (exchange workshop organized by SGP Brazil), its replication capacity has consolidated, as well as knowledge management regarding successful and not successful experiences. SGP Brazil Lessons and Experiences Seminars have made a great contribution on this tool replication scheme. On the other hand, SGP global promote regional replication workshops periodically fostering exchanges among the 125 SGP Global Country Programmes that enable to replicate experiences from other countries. Last April an exchange workshop, among SGP Upgraded Country Programmes was held at Quito, Ecuador to inter alia share and disseminate knowledge and experiences from successful on –the- ground actions for replication and upscaling of community –based landscape planning and management approaches and practices. Lastly, the replication approach could be done among Brazil's regions, such as to replicate experiences from Caatinga in the Cerrado.

g. UNDP comparative advantage

UNDP plays an outstanding leading role and is recognized for providing valuable contributions on policies and knowledge transference to the country; and its image is favorable within the national government.

Accountability and transparency easily available for public opinion.

Possibility of international projection of the experiences developed under UNDP's scope and on receiving expertise from projects from other parts of the globe (acting as a possible knowledge platform).

Multi-level incidence and influence, using its own policy guidelines (as CPD by period), with civil society, its organizations, private sector (companies and their federative organizations) and with the public sector at all levels.

h. Linkages between program and other interventions within the sector

The SGP in Brazil is a multifocal program. Brazil has ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and is therefore eligible for GEF financing in the three Focal Areas.

The SGP in Brazil is also directly relevant to, supportive of, and consistent with national priorities and policies such as: the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2003, that identified the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes as priority conservation areas); the National Program for Cerrado Biome Conservation and Sustainable Use (2005); the Action Plan for Prevention and Control of

Deforestation and Burning in the Cerrado Biome (PP Cerrado 2009); the National Policy on Traditional Peoples and Communities (2007) coordinated by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Social Development; the National Plan for Promotion of Socio-biodiversity Product Chains (SGP actions are relevant to this Plan, but the implementation of this was not as active as expected); the Food Acquisition Program from Family Agriculture (PAA) and the National School Food Program (PNAE), coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture; and the Plan for Deforestation Prevention and Control in the Caatinga.

The National Climate Change Policy (Law 12.187, 2009), contains the commitment of 38.9% emissions reduction by 2020. It foresees actions to reduce deforestation in all Brazilian biomes and includes actions to reach the target, such as creation of protected areas, homologation of indigenous territories, improvement of the deforestation monitoring system and incentives for sustainable production activities. Brazil has also a National Plan on Climate Change (2008); and, at a global level, presented at COP 15 the national goals for reduction of emissions by 2020, now including the Cerrado, in addition to the Amazon. Government actions on climate change mitigation in the two regions constitute the baseline for GEF-SGP CC actions through local communities.

Other policies relevant are developed by state and municipal governments (such as a state law that regulates golden grass harvest or one that determines free access to babaçu palm areas for traditional harvest), and the SGP program took into consideration these policies.

The regional SGP partners have established links with the project and provide long-term support to the community and producer-based organizations in the area. Among them: Alternativas para Pequena Agricultura no Tocantins (APA-TO); the Centro de Agricultura Alternativa do Norte de Minas (CAA) and the Centro de Agricultura Alternativa Vicente Nica de Minas Gerais; the Movimento Interestadual das Quebradeiras de Coco Babaçu (MIQCB) Piauí, Tocantins, Maranhão and Pará; the Associação em áreas de assentamento do estado do Maranhão (ASSEMA); and Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI).

Beyond the achievements, it is important to consolidate these linkages and develop strategies with strategic partners to continue to support organizations and producers in the sector beyond projects with SGP grants. Among them: the Satoyama Initiative and Amazonia Fund, which have been adequate sources of co-financing of the program.

i. Management arrangements

The Project is executed by ISPN (Instituto Sociedade, População e Natureza), a Brazilian NGO, that has been implementing the SGP since its establishment in Brazil in 1995, acting as implementing partner of UNDP that is the GEF implementing organization. This arrangement means that the SGP National Coordination Team, that is composed of two persons: the Country Program Manager and administrative assistant is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program. They are integrated in a team with the ISPN staff. This integration allows the ISPN staff to be involved in the implementation and supervision of the SGP grant projects; it also means that the technical team available to SGP (seven persons) is much larger than other similar projects, providing a good environment for strategic and technical discussions regarding the Project and its results and influence. The National Coordination Team maintains a close articulation with UNDP Country Office that supports ISPN on all matters related to project implementation and that is also an active member of the SGP National Steering Committee (NSC).

UNDP provides overall project oversight and takes responsibility for standard GEF project cycle management services beyond assistance and oversight of program design and negotiation, including project monitoring, periodic evaluations, troubleshooting, and reporting to the GEF.

The National Steering Committee (NSC) integrated by governmental and non-governmental organizations with a non-governmental majority, a UNDP representative and representatives from different sectors and organizations and individuals with expertise in the GEF Focal Areas. The NSC is responsible for grant approval and for determining the overall strategy of the SGP in the country.

3.2. Project implementation

In this section, an evaluation was undertaken on those aspects that are critical to the successful implementation of a project and the achievement of its objectives and results.

In the first instance, the management of implementing agencies and project execution were assessed.

a. Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation):

During this OP5, and with the SGP operating as an “upgrading” program⁹, management arrangements and procedures worked well, according to key stakeholders’ opinions and evaluator’s observations.

The Project is implemented by UNDP with ISPN as implementing partner. The SGP National Coordination Team is based at ISPN and handles technical and administrative relationships with partners and grantees. UNDP Country Office manages the transfers of funds to grantees and ISPN to cover the SGP NC expenses.

The coordination between ISPN, the SGP and the UNDP CO was good; the UNDP Program Officer is a member of the NSC and participates in most of the meetings and tasks and maintains a good idea of project activities, potential, problems, etc.

The Brazil SGP is well recognized and respected within UNDP CO and Federal Government.

The NSC meets regularly twice a year and contributes to the overall management of the SGP by participating in both the selection of proposals and also in the general orientation of the SGP Country Program. *Work planning:* Work planning does not present major problems. The SGP develops and follows an Annual Work plan that is used to guide the different operational tasks along the year. All approved project proposals are based on the SGP logframe results and indicators, and there is a clear and visible connection between the program logframe and the proposals. Only four out of more than a hundred projects, were reported with execution difficulties.¹⁰

b. Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region):

This aspect evaluates the process of adaptation and transformation from the outputs generated by the Project. Stakeholders participation in the project’s implementation was considered, and the sustainability and effectiveness of the results achieved.

⁹ The term “upgrading” refers to the graduation of the oldest and most mature of SGP’s Country Programmes to a new funding regime allowing higher funding levels and more budgetary control by the Country Programmes. Following the Upgrading Policy approved by GEF Council in November 2009, nine SGP Country Programmes (Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, and Philippines) were upgraded at the start of GEF 5 through separate GEF Full-Size Projects (FSPs). Another six SGP Country Programmes (Egypt, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Peru, Sri Lanka, and Thailand) were upgraded during GEF-6.

¹⁰ Based on MTR description.

The main stakeholders of the Project are local communities from the prioritized biomes who design and implement small grants projects. GEF-SGP partners are associations, cooperatives and NGOs that represent or assist local communities from the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes.

The Cerrado Network (Rede Cerrado) and the Semi-Arid Articulation (ASA) organization are special stakeholders because they congregate hundreds of CBOs and NGOs present in these biomes. They are represented in the NSC and contribute to disseminate information about GEF-SGP.

ISPN has a close relationship with the University of Brasília, which is especially important for GEF SGP's knowledge management activities and products. Through the Florelos Project, supported by the European Commission between 2007-2013, ISPN granted scholarships to students that are focusing their research on local communities and Cerrado conservation. Partnerships with the private sector were explored, especially in gastronomy and through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Cooperation with local and national government institutions is fundamental to turn pilot experiences into public policies.

Also, the program has encouraged articulation with government agencies of different levels, agricultural Development Agencies and society in its whole, building trusting bonds among the community. The program aimed to empower civil society while promoting mechanisms to reduce distance with the Government. Notwithstanding, dissimilar links with the public sector were informed, varying, particularly on the Federal Government in charge.

Civil Society networks promote communication with the Government, its support to the program by mobilizing technical and financial resources, and the programmer's continuity in Cerrado and Caatinga.

c. Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was effective and provides adequate information for the project's indicators. ISPN's team involvement in the project's implementation and supervision was considered appropriate for the involved stakeholders, including their technical quality as well as the flexibility for problem resolution.

The monitoring strategy on the objectives and expected results achievement, included organization's enhancement on behalf of ISPN, through training on several aspects such as planning, accountability, procurement guides, audits, among others.

On one hand, the inclusion of the M&E system from the beginning of execution, has favored supervising and the application of the necessary adjustments on time. On the other hand, ISPN's experience on community work and on the field, enhanced trust bonds and thus, ownership on behalf of the involved parties.

The implemented monitoring strategy also included operational meetings, the development of management tools and information gathering, field visits and permanent contact (by phone or e-mail).

Periodical reports are developed and specific tools for surveys and maps are designed where a summary of each projects situation is visualized. Nevertheless, there is no specific monitoring that measures the project's impact on biodiversity with a scientific method, but it is measured in a qualitative way. In this sense, interviewees suggested the incorporation of a biologist to the project's staff and to quantify some results in order to identify impacts on biodiversity. It is challenging to develop quantitative data since it's a constant dynamic process. Beneficiary families are recorded along with their income generation, since some projects have long term income generation targets. The indicators in the logical framework do not contain information such as

“leadership change in organizations” In terms of gender, intercultural analysis and youth dimensions.

Moreover, the National Steering Committee plays a relevant role within the Project. It constitutes a diverse, participative space where representatives from different organisms and organizations meet to assess the grantees effort and discuss project’s strategies.

d. Project Finance:

The Terminal Evaluation assessed the key financial aspects of the project, including the scope of the planned and realized co-financing. Project cost and financing data were analyzed, including annual expenses. The variances between planned and realized expenditures were assessed.

The effectiveness was better than the average of GEF projects. The SGP monitored the co-financing reports of beneficiaries and other co-financing sources identified in the PRODOC. Management costs remained at levels like those of previous operations; and there were no criticisms of the costs of project coordination by the authorities or other organizations involved.

The budget and expenditures of GEF Grant is summarized in the following tables:
(Source: PRODOC, signed project revisions and latest version provided by Brazil UNDP office)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (up to date)
Total expenditures	347,213.56	1,113,951.78	1,321,414.00	1,060,671.61	656,571.17	126,025.00
Cumulative %	6.94	29.22	55.65	76.86	89.99	92.89

Year	2014 and beyond	2013 and prior	2015 and beyond	2014 and prior	2016 and beyond	2015 and prior	2017 and beyond	2016 and prior	2018 and beyond	2017 and prior	At the TE (April 2018)
Total Budget	4,652,786.44		3,538,834.66		2,217,420.66		1,156,749.05		500,117.88		
Total utilization		347,213.46		1,461,165.34		2,782,579.34		3,843,250.95		4,499,822.12	4.644.407,64
%		6.94		29.22		55.65		76.86		89.99	92.89

The total co-financing situation at the time of the TE is summarized in the following tables:

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (US\$)		Government (US\$)		Partner Agency (US\$)		Total (US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
• In-kind support								
• Other								
Totals (US\$)				1,023,741		901,518		1,925,259
				53.17%		46.82%		100%

The co-financing situation at the time of the TE is summarized in the following table:

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Pledged Amount (US\$)	Accounted at MTE time (July 2015) (US\$) (%)	Accounted at TE time (April 2018) (US\$) (%)
UNEP/Satoyama	COMDEKS	Grant	293,500	149,690 (49%)	293,500 (100%)
GEF Agency	UNDP	Grant	1,100,000	0 (0%)	2.439.388,00 (221%)
ISPN	Amazon Fund/BNDES	Grant	2,350,000	1,753,500 (75%)	2,823,446.53 (120%)
CBOs	Grantees	Grant	800,000	215,040 (27%)	901,518 (113%)
CBOs	Grantees	In Kind	800,000	351,570 (44%)	1,023,741 (128%)
Total of			5,343,500	2,465,800 (46%)	7.481.593,53(140%)*

* GEF Agency/UNDP Grant not included.

The previous table shows that the general level of co-financing at the time of the MTR time was 46%, and at the time of the TE is 140% (GEF Agency/UNDP Grant not included)

The commitments of other sources (national government, UNDP, etc.) were counted at the end of the project; and the expected levels of co-financing defined in the PRODOC were reached.

One final issue to highlight is that, in all visited areas, the products resulting from the investments made by the SGP grants are visible (construction, materials, equipment, works of various kinds, home gardens, etc.) depending on the type of funded project.

e. Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation

This aspect involves the quality and usefulness of the monitoring and evaluation system, analyzing the tools and mechanisms established to weigh the results of project's implementation

ISPNI's monitoring and training strategy, planning, accountability, procurement guide, audits, etc. were essential for the project's effectiveness.

The project board bi annual meetings were the main decision-making mechanisms used for adaptive management using the information provided for Steering Committees' meetings. The participation was generally good, with consistent leadership by ISPNI and the national program coordinator.

Project implementation reviews (PIRs) were completed on an annual basis (each July), reflecting the progress made by the end of June of the respective year long period. The evaluator found the PIRs to be sufficient regarding detail, and input was provided by the National Coordinator, the UNDP program officer and the UNDP-GEF regional technical advisor.

Starting in 2012 the project has been producing quarterly monitoring reports (QMRs) and internal project assurance reports (IPARs), using templates provided by UNDP. These reports addressed more activity level issues and were a good management tool for documenting issues and adaptive measures.

f. UNDP and Execution Partner implementation / execution coordination, and operational issues

UNDP plays a distinguished role in leading civil society and a 25-year experience in SGP.

Its strategy in working with civil society for the project's presentation and supervision ensuring the quality of the supported projects

The organization guarantees accountability and transparency and works on developing clear information for the Project's Steering Committee

ISPNI counts with highly trained staff with ability to articulate upwards with government and donors and downwards with civil society networks, fostering incidence in the addressed issues, makes organizations visible, contributes in creating awareness internationally and nationally on the importance of conserving biomes that are not usually seen as critical in Brazil, where the Amazons gets all the attention.

UNDP and GEF's added value are their capacities for technical assistance on procurement, hiring, monitoring and evaluation, resource management, knowledge management and international successful experiences survey. They pursue of international commitments and the possibility to mobilize funds from those commitments. Also, they develop empiric evidence for its use in public policies as of independent evaluations, have political neutrality when stakeholders have mutual trust

issues and are capable of making visible those isolated communities that cannot access to decision-makers.

3.3. Project Results

Envisaged targets for the projects 'objectives and results indicators were mostly exceeded.

Both Logical Framework and Framework based on results have been **Highly Satisfactory (HS)** for evaluating progress towards the objective and the envisaged results.

Mid-term evaluation (September 2015) and 2016 Substantial Review made some adjustments in some indicators targets as follows:

- Outcome 1: New indicator and target. Number of families in Caatinga and Cerrado generating income from marketing biodiversity products. New target: 5000 families.
- Outcome 2: New target: it is reduced to 3000 the number of hectares under agro ecological management.

The following are considered the Project's main achievements:

- More than 400 municipalities over 20 states participation (that includes 15 direct states involved, 26 states including different actions during the SGP duration, 27 if its includes other actions, like SP Phneiro market Store)
- 16.050 benefited families;
- 8.590 families marketing socio – biodiversity products;
- 3000 families applying sustainable soil and water management practices;
- 10.480 people that received training;
- 952.600 has under sustainable management in the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes;
- 4.730 has in restoration process;
- 1.616 has under agro ecological agricultural management;
- 6 150 has managed with water and soil conservation techniques;
- 15.521.169 tCO₂e in avoided emissions;
- 70.000 tCO₂e sequestered from atmosphere through habitat restoration or agro ecological management;
- USD 566,610 (47%) counterparts from projects at MTE time; and USD 1,925,259 (120%) counterparts from projects at TE time (see tables in Program Finance section);
- More than 150 native varieties maintained by beneficiaries;
- Enhancement for more than 300 community and civil society organizations;
- Strengthening of traditional people and communities such as: Rede Cerrado, Mobilização dos Povos Indígenas do Cerrado (MOPIC), Articulação Pacari;
- Núcleo de Pequi e outros frutos do Cerrado, Central do Cerrado, among others;
- Over 60 species recovered (according to qualitative reconstruction made by workshop participants);
- Support for indigenous, quilombolas, gerazeiras, family agriculture and agro ecologic communities on soil management, generating income and maintaining their traditions, reducing urban migration;

- xix. Development and dissemination of publications related to best management practices and processing of 15 native species of Cerrado and Caatinga biomes;
- xx. Articulation of diverse sociobiodiversity products such as pequi, baru, buriti, babaçu, umbu and licuri, among several others;
- xxi. Projects for public policies on production and commercialization of Traditional People and Communities and Family Farmers (PCTAF) Products Income generating environmental conservation, social inclusion and maintaining life styles promotion for thousands of families in 15 States in Cerrado and Caatinga, through supporting agro extractive practices that are very relevant in these regions with deep rural exodus and other threats from the expansion of the agriculture border, including violent and threatening situations for the beneficiary families or not making their vulnerable situation visible;
- xxii. Disbursement of resources once the strategic counterpart was provided so entities could to diverse funding sources;
- xxiii. Politic, economic and social empowerment of women and youth;
- xxiv. Inclusion of PCTAF products in the governments procurement programs.

a. Overall results (attainment of objectives):

Outcomes	Rate:
Outcome 1: Conservation of the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes through community initiatives on sustainable resource use in productive landscapes	Highly Satisfactory (HS)
Outcome 2: Maintenance of carbon stock, avoiding land use change and improved agricultural and forest management at the community level	Satisfactory (S)
Outcome 3: Sustainable land management techniques preventing degradation, restoring agro ecosystem services, and improving livelihoods of local communities implemented	Satisfactory (S)
Outcome 4: Communities deliver global environmental benefits through capacity development and knowledge management	Highly Satisfactory (HS)

Criteria	Rate	Comments
Relevance	R	The project is relevant to the main objectives of the GEF focal areas and environmental and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels.
Effectiveness	HS	The results and expected objectives of the project have been achieved in a highly satisfactory way.
Efficiency	HS	The project was implemented in a highly satisfactory way, in-line with international and national norms and standards.
Sustainability	L	The sustainability is considered likely given the moderates financial risks, and low socioeconomic, institutional and governance, and environmental risks to maintain long-term project results.
Impact	S	The impact is significant and there are indications that the project has contributed to progress towards reducing environmental stress and improving the ecological state.
Outcomes	HS	The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
M&E	HS	
I&E	HS	

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	Rating	2. IA& EA Execution	Rating
M&E design at entry	HS	Quality of UNDP Implementation	HS
M&E Plan Implementation	HS	Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	HS
Overall quality of M&E	HS	Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	HS
3. Assessment of Outcomes	Rating	4. Sustainability	Rating
Relevance	R	Financial resources	ML
Effectiveness	HS	Socio-political	L
Efficiency	HS	Institutional framework and governance	L
Overall Project Outcome Rating	HS	Environmental	L
Overall likelihood of sustainability	S	Overall sustainability	L

b. Relevance

The Full-Size Project of GEF's SGP 5th Operational Phase is relevant regarding the country's goals, the 2030 Agenda, the community objectives at local level and GEF's areas of intervention.

The Project, which was intended to guarantee environmental global benefits through community initiatives as well as conservation actions and biodiversity sustainable use, and the maintenance of carbon stocks in the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes is relevant and innovative within these biomes.

The Project is considered **Relevant (R)** according to the objectives of GEF's focal areas and priorities regarding environments and local, regional and national development.

c. Effectiveness & Efficiency

It is considered that resources have been managed in a **Highly Satisfactory (HS)** way.

ISPNI's committed co-funding has been executed adequately and is being recorded in the projects and program levels.

Counterpart funds (Satoyama Initiative), Amazon Fund and other funds were executed correctly and in due time, complementing GEF's funds.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system was effective and provides adequate information for the project's indicators.

ISPNI's team involvement in the Project's implementation and supervision was considered appropriate for the involved stakeholders, including their technical quality as well as the flexibility for problem resolution.

The Project's outputs and outcomes are visible in the field as better agricultural practices, conservation and water management actions, agroforestry and silvo pastoral systems, new alternatives for sustainable production, equipment, installations, empowered organizations, publications, web sites, etc.

The envisaged objectives were achieved and, in some cases, even exceeded. In this sense, the Project's effectiveness is considered **Highly Satisfactory (HS)**.

d. Country ownership

The Project is consistent with several National policies, agreements and plans among others, such as National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, National Program for Cerrado Biome Conservation and Unsustainable Use, Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Deforestation and Burning in the Cerrado biome, National Policy on Traditional Peoples and Communities, National Plan for Promotion of Sociobiodiversity Product Chains, Food Acquisition Program from Family Agriculture, Plan for deforestation Prevention and Control in Caatinga, National Action Program of Combat Desertification and to Mitigate the Effects of Drought, Climate Change Policy and National Plan on Climate Change.

e. Mainstreaming¹¹

The main concept that guided this section's evaluation was "*Biodiversity mainstreaming is the process of embedding biodiversity considerations into policies, strategies and practices of key public*

¹¹ This paragraph follows The Mainstreaming Biodiversity In Practice, A Stap Advisory Document http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/Mainstreaming-Biodiversity-LowRes_1.pdf (October 2013).

and private actors that impact or rely on biodiversity, so that it is conserved and sustainably used both locally and globally” (op cit. page 7).

Brazil's UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) from period 2007-2011 was taken into account during the project's first phase design. The UNDAF five prioritized expected results were derived from the 2005 Common Country Assessment (CCA) findings. The GEF-SGP Brazil Project has been designed to contribute to the Fifth UNDAF Result "Efficient use of natural resources to ensure equitable and environmentally sustainable economic development". By targeting women's groups as well as traditional and indigenous communities, GEF SGP Brazil also contributes to the second UNDAF expected result "Gender, racial and ethnic inequalities reduced, taking into consideration the impact of territorial differences". The main target beneficiaries of the GEF SGP are indigenous communities, small farmers and other traditional population such as afro-descendant, wild species collectors, artisans and Brazil nut and babaçu collectors that depend on ecosystem services for maintaining their livelihoods. GEF SPG Brazil strategy is also aligned with goal seven of the Millennium Development Goals on environmental sustainability, a UNDP priority in Brazil.

The fourth UN Strategic Framework for Brazil reflects a new vision of international cooperation, appropriate to the current Brazilian reality and brings the new global development agenda, 2030 Agenda ("Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development") to center stage as a priority action area. Brazil played a leading role in the Agenda's development and was engendered in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio + 20). It aims to further the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and bring relevant topics such as the sustainability of economic, social and human development to the global discussion. The new 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) also continue the progress made by the MDGs towards fully integrating the commitment to promoting gender equality.

The synergy between Brazil's priorities and the international agenda can be seen in the convergence between the 28 strategic guidelines of the Brazilian Government's Multi-Year Plan 2016-2019 (MYP 2016-2019) and the 17 SDGs. Consequently, the United Nations System in Brazil, along with its partners, has selected five priority areas for the next cycle of strategic planning. These are the same pillars as the 2030 Agenda: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships (5 Ps). UNDP is working with SGP and the GoB in order to implement national environmental legislation, multilateral and international commitments, focused on biodiversity, desertification, chemicals, Montreal protocol and climate change, supporting the GoB in the implementation of an environmental regulatory framework and related policies that promote sustainable management of natural resources, effective ecosystem services, land use and land use change, recovery of degraded areas, as well as territorial and environmental management, by indigenous people, quilombolas and rural populations in order to improve their resilience to climate change, to reduce land degradation and also to guarantee their constitutional rights. By working with vulnerable groups, UNDP will promote their productive inclusion and access to markets, increasing their income from maintaining the standing forests. Special focus was placed on vulnerable areas and populations with low and medium HDI, especially North and Northeast rural poor and afro-descendant women, indigenous people, agro-extractivists and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, working more intensely with states and municipalities. A focus on reduction of inequalities and building resilience to shocks will be adopted across the portfolio, especially by promoting alliances between national, local and public-private institutions and UN agencies.

UNDP and the SGP are cooperating with national and subnational authorities, academia and civil society providing good practices and pilot experiences that could help in the design of public policies that have a gender sensitive and inter-sectorial approach, with a focus on the poorest and more vulnerable areas of Brazil. In this context, the project's results are considered to have made relevant

and sustainable contributions mainly in the results of the Project and the Sustainable Development Goals¹².

Moreover, the project's results are considered to have made relevant and sustainable contributions mainly related to Goal 1: No Poverty; Goal 2: Zero Hunger; Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being for People; Goal 4: Quality Education; Goal 5: Gender Equality; Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation; 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; Goal; Goal 10: Reducing Inequalities; Goal; Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production; Goal 13: Climate Action; Goal 15: Life on Land; Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals¹³.

Progress was evaluated to assure the programmer's achievements embedding biodiversity, gender and vulnerable groups (mainstreaming). These aspects were evaluated at participatory level, in different workshops. The evaluator observed this achievement during the II Lessons and Experiences Seminar of the PPP-ECOS in Cerrado and Caatinga held between May 8th and May 10th. (See **Annex 4**) to generalize the ownership of biodiversity conservation, fight against land degradation, climate change impact at local level and human rights approach sustained by UNDP. This was achieved through various activities, such as beneficiaries training, the development of guidelines and other important training pieces, and communication campaigns at local and regional level, among others. Following, the cited documents "most apparent win-win programs involve trade-offs between desired conservation outcomes and desired social outcomes" (*op cit.* page 8).

The SGP beneficiaries incorporated agriculture and forestry practices that mainstream biodiversity and they exchange different experiences in the selected biomes. This point is especially critical vis a vis the mutually reinforcing increases in dryness, temperature, dieback and wildfire and the possible way to change this situation for which is necessary to keep natural vegetation standing and seek to promote a forest transition (see Donald Sawyer, *op cit.* 2018)

Another fundamental aspect that has a profound relevance on sustainability and long-term impacts is the debate at national and subnational level of regulations. Some of them suggested from SGP experiences, were incorporated to protect traditional crops and native flora and fauna, in accordance with the PRODOC guidelines.

Different researchers also worked on payment for ecosystem services (PES) as was pointed out in the intermediate evaluation through the professionals; Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+); environmental certification; and climate change adaptation.¹⁴

The communication actions carried out to mainstream the achievements stands out as a successful strategy in terms of community ownership and involvement in conservation. Social communication campaigns focused to consumers and public opinion helped in consciousness creation. The community has incorporated very important conservation practices for future generations. It is key that this knowledge is appropriate and permanently installed in the community, in order to guarantee its sustainability.

¹² UNDAF documents, UNDP Brazil documents, this section is prepared based in UNDP documents and different SGP documents.

¹³ The "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDG/ODS) are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations in 2015. The goals are broad and somewhat interdependent, yet each has a separate list of targets to achieve. Achieving all 169 targets would signal accomplishing all 17 goals. The SDGs cover social and economic development issues including poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment and social justice. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

¹⁴

profile/Valeria_Vinha/publication/268373455_ESTUDO_46_UTILIZACAO_SUSTENTAVEL_DA_BIODIVERSIDADE/links/56f0620e08ae584badc93338/ESTUDO-46-UTILIZACAO-SUSTENTAVEL-DA-BIODIVERSIDADE.pdf

f. Sustainability

The Project's **Sustainability** is considered **likely (L)** given the moderates financial risks, and low socioeconomic, institutional and governance, and environmental risks to maintain long-term program results.

It is critical to develop and strengthen links with government agencies in order to ensure the project's continuation and its results' sustainability.

Sustainability could be achieved through diverse funding sources and expects to form part of GEF 7 with its current institutional partners.

Youth's participation in the Project and the construction of capacities within this group; jointly with the reduction of migration to the city, are aspects that substantially contribute to each project's sustainability and in the sustainability of the whole program.

UNDP's support implies sustainability for the involved organizations through making their problems in threatening contexts visible.

Progress to mainstream Project's results and enhance its ownership has been evaluated. This was accomplished through several activities such as training for beneficiary organizations, articulation with experts, universities and some government institutions. This is a critical aspect with strong relevance on the Project's sustainability and long-term impacts. Some sanitary norms in the honey industry were updated, although it is necessary to continue working on the design and approval of a regulation for native honey. Also, micro funding mechanisms were implemented such as revolving funds, that enable other families own the Project's results and becomes part of this initiative. Besides the revolving funds, the Swiss Embassy has fostered access to the Innovation Support Fund (FAIS).

Communication actions have also contributed to the results dissemination and to the communities' involvement.

The community has incorporated conservation practices which are very important for future generations. It is crucial for these lessons are owned and installed on a permanent basis within communities to ensure their sustainability.

g. Impact

The TE assessed the achievement of impacts or progress towards the achievement of future impacts, since it is usually difficult to appreciate these within the lifetime of each project. Particularly, the reviewed aspects were: i) verifiable improvement in the ecological status of the intervened biomes, ii) verifiable reduction of stress on their ecological systems. For this purpose, two dimensions were analyzed: i) the implementation of indicators on environmental stress reduction or the improvement of the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes' ecological status; and ii) if any adjustments have been made on assumptions and risks considered during the design stage in order to contribute to the objective's achievement.

Even if agricultural expansion has had a positive impact on the region's economy, its negative effect on the environment and local communities are substantial (such as deforestation, soil loss, landscape fragmentation, water sources pollution and rural families' displacements). This could result in ecological stress and impacts such as biodiversity loss, among others.

In addition to their territory downsizing, communities face water scarcity, soil erosion and impoverishment, which are the main reasons for rural depopulation. These are critical aspects for the project's sustainability and long-term impacts.

During the project's implementation, reports and surveys were undertaken, and maps were developed in order to visualize each project situation. In order to complete the analysis,

stakeholder's opinion was included to inquire on their perspective on the Project and explore (qualitatively) on the impacts on the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes. Nevertheless, there was not a specific monitoring, with quantitative and methodic approach, with an experimental method, that can desegregate results *with* and *without* the program, in order to measure the scope of those impacts, which are referred on the recommendations.

Evidence gathered during the TE:

Even if improvement verification systems were not implemented on the biomes' ecological status, nor indicators on stress reduction of ecological systems that have been intervened; interviewees generally concur in that *"the impact is significant and there is evidence on the Project contributing to progress on environmental stress reduction and the improvement on the ecological status"*. On the other hand, there are no evidences of changes in the assumptions and risks considered in the Program's design nor during its implementation.

During the interviews to stakeholders, almost unanimity, positive impacts were related to social dimensions approached in the initiatives, such as: i) an enhancement of the organizational and associative capacities of the local communities and their organizations, ii) a progress in productive best practices and resources management (added value, marketing), and iii) a reversion in internal migration processes (mainly youth) towards the main urban centers, including the return of rural families due to the new opportunities for generation income in a relatively stable manner and better life quality to those in the urban centers.

Relevant examples, which point out the lack of quantitative indicators, are Central do Cerrado's activities. Even if they achieved to incorporate 60.000 hectares under sustainable management practices (with recorded best practices), which would imply a reduction in the ecological system's stress for this biome, with the exception of the peasants work on land degradation, but is not developed with biodiversity indicators.

Another example comes from analyzing the expected positive impacts on water sources conservation by local communities, the logging and deforestation reduction achieved through alternative extractive actions, or the reduction of drought induced stress by catching and storing rain water for production (in tanks). This will require specific quantitative indicators design and implementation to identify and measure of the contributions to conservation through the ecological system's sustainable use.

At the moment of PIR 2017, the envisaged gender analysis had not taken place, but different studies are being carried out in 2018. Nevertheless, some achievements related to gender equity promotion and women empowerment were identified in the PIR¹⁵.

Gender is a crosscutting issue in SGP Brazil (PPP-ECOS), almost 30% of the grants have specific actions aimed at gender equality and empowering women, and 13 grants are managed by women and focus exclusively on this constituency.

According to PIR 2017 report, the COMDEKS Programme in Brazil completed its activities, and as an additional result of the supported initiatives, the first Women's Association was established in the landscape. With the remaining funds of BRA/COMDEKS/14/01, the women association's headquarter was built. Other women groups were also strengthened through BRA/COMDEKS/14/05 by establishing a facility for local fruits processing into preserves and marmalades. It is one of the few initiatives in the region that is completely run by women and aiming to improve their livelihoods by generating income. All grantees discussed gender issues

¹⁵ PIR 2017 pp 30-31

through capacity development activities and women participation was guaranteed in every COMDEKS activity, since it is still a challenge in the landscape.

Project BRA/15/14, coordinated by the Pacari Network, has been supporting six women's groups in improving production of handmade medicines and vegetable oils made from 13 native species. 28 women were trained in management practices and marketing. One of the communities is generating on average USD 200 per women per year by marketing pequi oil. The other five groups are starting to organize their production, defining prices, good practices, contacting markets, and improving labeling. Some groups are also purchasing equipment and remodeling facilities for processing, aiming at generating income and empowering women.

Project BRA/13/14, which benefits the Canabrava Community Association, just inaugurated a facility to process umbu fruits, Caatinga-passion-fruit and other garden fruits, generating income to 10 women in a local community. The group of women is well recognized in the small municipality of Santa Brígida as an example of rural development run by women.

Project BRA/15/31, coordinated by the NGO Casa da Mulher do Nordeste, benefitted 78 women through the construction of fuel-efficient cook stoves in their houses. This cook stove consumes 45% less firewood and produces less smoke - requiring less time to collect firewood, reducing impact on wood resources, and contributing to their health. The women claimed that they are saving a lot because they also reduced the use of gas ovens in a 70%. The NGO managed the resources of the project very well and invested in water reuse kits for 20 women. The kits consist of three filters that clean sink water for irrigation. Women greatly appreciate this technology that is helping them to improve food security, particularly in the context of a severe lack of water for production in the region.”

Also, four networks are supported by SGP: i) Cerrado Central, a second-level cooperative that congregates 25 associations and cooperatives throughout the Cerrado biome focusing on marketing; ii) Pacari, a network composed by raizeiras (traditional healers) from four states working with medicinal plants; iii) Interstate Movement of the Babaçu Crackers (MIQCB), which congregates 400,000 women that depend on babaçu products; and iv) Pequi Core of Northern Minas Gerais, which congregates 19 associations and cooperatives working with pequi and other Cerrado fruits in the region.

Gender analysis by this TE was developed through interviews to several women which are/were involved in the projects, young people and indigenous people. A specific technical assistance was always established for projects led by vulnerable groups¹⁶.

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECCOMENDATIONS AND LESSONS

4.1. Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Project

There were minor adjustments made to the logical results framework during the inception phase and later during the program, including MTR's suggestions. There were concerns raised in the MTR

¹⁶ There is a Gender Analysis in progress which objective is to evaluate the extent to which a gender approach has been included in five of the GEF-SGP supported projects, identify their gaps, fragile aspects, potentialities and convergence points in order to assess the implementation process of these ongoing projects, and also to ensure gender mainstreaming in the design of future projects and programs. Unfortunately, this consultancy's duration exceeds the present TE. Nevertheless, this study will hopefully contribute with future impact analysis of SGP in gender mainstreaming. "Consultoria para Analise de Gênero nos Projetos GEF BRA/14/G31; BRA/14/G32; BRA/14/G33; BRA/12/G32; BRA/067/G32". Work Plan. Unpublished.

regarding adaptive management, and management responses were implemented to address some of these issues.

In terms of gender issues, the Brazil SGP PRODOC has no specific objectives or indicators for gender and youth (the indicator used is “families”), but the field visits showed active presence of women and youth in the activities and that the concerns about key issues for both are well considered and achieved in the field projects.

All projects approved in GEF-6 (1 July 2014 through 30 June 2018) are required to carry out a gender analysis. Recently, consultants on gender mainstreaming were hired by UNDP to assess the project on management tools to include for working with vulnerable groups.

Marketing of the beneficiaries’ projects and access to market tools, in order to improve income generation for the peasant families, were developed (i.e. Central do Cerrado). The idea of using recognized persons of the gastronomy field in a Store in Sao Paulo (i.e. chef Atala) improved the integration of beneficiary production in new chains and the creation of new consumers for Cerrado and Caatinga products (baru, babaçu, native bees honey, different fruits, flour made from regional species, natural medicine and cosmetics, etc). Nevertheless, here is a need of a study of how beneficiaries production reaches the local and the national market.

Monitoring and evaluation of the projects was supervised by ISPN and UNDP and could be supported by other Steering Committee members (as mentioned in group and individual interviews to members, and especially considering the close relationship of some members with the communities where the SGP is developed).

Some external/quantitative source of evaluation is recommended, such as trade data collected outside the executing agencies in order to contribute on impact analysis.

Technical and financial resources were allocated to strengthen organizations and increase the likelihood of success of local projects. Undoubtedly, this creation of effective capacity will help to generate benefits, both to local communities and to the conservation and restoration of ecological systems.

It is recognized that capacity-building is one of the most important achievements of the SGP. By building social capital (as an integral part of strategic investment in the community), the Project contributed to the sustainability of the benefits of each initiative at the territorial level.

However (although the difficulty of developing quantitative data in these processes is admitted), it is necessary to quantify some of the results to identify impacts on biodiversity (such as improvements in ecological status and reductions in Stress in the ecological systems of these biomes), as well as on the long-term economic profitability. Efforts to generate this data should also be integrated into a process for transmitting to community-based organizations some of these capacities.

4.2. Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the program

ISPN, UNDP and the NSC are involved in several initiatives to reinforce the initial benefits from the Project. The implementation of similar strategies on community, and participation approach, were considered at federal level. The project’s orientation on community, biodiversity and land conservation enabled the building of bridges with new programs like CONECTA: National Landscape Connectivity Program.

The Capacity building is one of most important aspects of the SGP work. Building social capital as integral part to strategic community investment provides leverages and multiplies the impact of each project at territorial level.

The Project allocated technical and financial resources at regional and national levels, by strengthening local partner organizations, promoting self-reliance, and increasing the likelihood of

Project success. The constitution of networks of producer's organizations provide the basis to move towards ownership of sustainable improvements in the production and conservation of biodiversity, as a space of incidence for the implementation of public policies in line with these objectives.

Even if the effects in terms of empowerment at community level are remarkable, a more exhaustive analysis should be undertaken in terms of gender and human rights approach in order to assess long term impacts.

The decentralization strategy of the Project next to the strengthening of the NGOs in the field favored the anchoring of the Project, but it is necessary to continue with the articulation with other programs and resources. Effective capacity building benefits both local stakeholders and conservation, and land restoration by generating inclusive processes that strengthen trust in community investment, build commitment and help the poorest and vulnerable groups (indigenous people, traditional communities, quilombolas, networks of women and youth) to be visible and to improve their relationships with local and federal government that could help these CBOs.

The Project led to the establishment of links with the hearing of the Solidarity Economy and with the gourmet sector by initiating a process of awareness of consumers, although it is necessary to continue raising awareness about these aspects. For example, although in general the interaction with the chefs was positive, in some organizations conflict arose on the actions being aimed at consumers of privileged sectors.

The Project supported the creation and reinforced different networks (i.e. ASA, Rede Nectar, STTR, Rede do Cerrado, among others).

Objectives were set consciously, and several initiatives count on certain social capital, an established network and strong institutional partners (CSO 2nd and 3rd level, government and private). In some cases, the people in the communities have chosen to be a beneficiary of the project, instead of becoming more actively involved through associative spaces. The construction of these associative spaces requires coaching to establish bonds of trusts and mechanisms that favor the mutual benefits. Gender and vulnerable groups indicators could contain information such as "leadership change in organizations" and include a gender and intercultural analysis to know how to proceed in each ethnic group given the difficulties that often exist in communities to adapt this gender approach to their own cultural heritage

4.3. Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

- a) While the SGP regional partners (such as APA-TO, CAV, CAA, MIQCB, ASSEMA, CTI and others) are providing long-term support to the CBOs in their areas, it is important for the SGP to develop strategies with these organizations to keep supporting SGP-supported CBOs beyond the SGP grant projects. In other words, local groups will not become autonomous and sustainable over a period of two years with a small grant; longer processes are needed. Hence the importance of defining these strategies and rely on the work of strategic partners beyond the duration of the grants.
- b) Reinforce the idea that processes require greater time (even if SGP guides restrict those times).
- c) Since long term actions are needed to reinforce local group's autonomy and sustainability processes, it is recommended to define strategies to delegate work on the strategic partners beyond SGP funding.
- d) The SGP agro-ecological work is very good and very important and it is very focused on water issues and plant production. However, the MTR perceives much less emphasis on including cattle raising in the agro-ecological approach. Livestock production is the activity that after agribusiness occupies more land and causes more degradation of the Cerrado. Therefore, a more explicit emphasis on cattle raising issues is recommended, for example through pilot grant

projects helping peasants to evolve from extensive ranching to stabled systems articulated with release of land for natural regeneration of the Cerrado. Discussion on organic or ecological production effects on families' income should be deepened since there is no consensus on these issues on behalf of the implementing entities.

- e) Projects supported by the SGP include women and youth. However, the logical framework has no targets or indicators on this issue and not obvious unbundled records of activities, participation and impact on these groups. The SGP should advance in this respect, at least at the record level; merely recording information on these aspects draws attention to them and create space for more explicit activities about them.
- f) Elaborate management tools for working with vulnerable groups: where indicators could contain information such as "leadership change in organizations" and include a gender and intercultural analysis to know how to proceed in each ethnic group given the difficulties that often exist in communities to adapt this gender approach to their own cultural heritage.
- g) The SGP should continue supporting efforts to simplify regulations for marketing family agriculture and biodiversity products with basic processing (pulp, jellies, preserves, flour, etc.). Basic processing adds value to products and much needed income to rural families; unnecessary or excessive regulations blocking access to markets need to be adjusted or removed.
- h) There seems to be many opportunities to tenders, sales, projects, funding, etc. for CBOs and local organizations from different federal, state and municipal entities, but the information about this seems to be fragmented and scattered. The SGP should analyze the possibility of supporting efforts to perform clearing-house actions to organize the information and make it more accessible for Cerrado and Caatinga organizations. Capitalize GEF 7 opportunity and the inclusion of new countries to share replicable experiences and lessons learnt considering SGP Brazil seniority and success, thus, promoting support for its continuation among civil society and government. Program promotion and expand and strengthen links with government strategic partners for supporting and fostering local communities and their initiatives. Attention should be drawn on the bottom-up approach enables an implementing lesson that cannot be accomplished through government levels.
- i) The Project has prospered on those States included, where many of their communities count on the continuance of SGP's support. Some of the accomplished benefits may be lost if SGP does not continue its implementation, especially regarding marketing of products.
- j) Apply academic knowledge in the search for achieving conservation objectives.
- k) Ensure that all supported productive activities are strategic regarding their actual contribution to diminishing the pressure on the target ecosystems (not only people quality of life).
- l) Seek collaboration with other full size relevant conservation and alternative agricultural projects (some of which are funded by GEF) and national programs in order to enhance the SGP supported activities' impact and sustainability.
- m) Do not expand to new territories unless big scale connections with other conservation and agro ecology efforts compel such expansion,
- n) Evaluate the need for decentralizing ISPN's human resources to improve articulation with local/state decision-makers and also for becoming familiar with knowledge developed on each biome's academic centers.
- o) Analyze the inclusion of complementary lines and the respective technical assistance (for example: community eco-tourism, cultural manifestations of those involved).

- p) Hire or mobilize through other parties or experts from other successful projects that can provide technical assistance.
- q) Mobilize funds from international best practices that can contribute to the projects, including South-South cooperation through ABC (Brazil's Cooperation Agency) and UNDP.
- r) Strengthen links among key stakeholders, especially those from government and UNDP and ISPN to ensure a continuous and coordinated approach towards future development of conservation of biodiversity through the maintenance of carbon stocks in the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes.
- s) Enhance efforts to involve youth, women, indigenous and afro descendant people and traditional communities and develop specific tender lines for technical assistance.
- t) Involve private sector by means of a strategic Project mechanism, developing marketing strategies and strategies for reaching scale economies. Analyze the pertinence on disseminating results and assess along with business chambers.
- u) Establish ecological baselines based on actual data regarding the size and distribution (distance between) of patches of target ecosystem over the landscape of interest and the conservation status of those patches. (i.e. CONECTA - National Landscape Connectivity Program).
- v) Raise awareness on conservation from the sustainable use of the natural resources, demonstrating that it is possible to work on conservation *with* communities and not only on uninhabited national parks or protected areas.
- w) Plan an Impact Evaluation to verify conservation efficiency of the communities in a 5 years period.
- x) Contribute to national discussion on land use on behalf of communities facing agribusiness and monoculture threats.
- y) Generate a new social communication and dissemination process. Develop and implement a communication strategy that all involved stakeholders can execute, with different pieces for each stakeholder, from Policy Brief to use of community media.
- z) Build articulation spaces between government, civil society and the private sector, enabling contributions in critical issues such as sustainable management of land for biodiversity conservation. This represents an opportunity to expand and consolidate alliances with other UN System organisms and other external cooperation entities that include specific environmental and sustainable development statements in their operations, leveraging resources and stimulating other funding sources work jointly with the UN System.
- aa) Deepen actions aimed at raising awareness and promote people's consciousness on the need of a change in order to improve livelihood and the importance of income to maintain ecosystems. Also, awareness among the private sector on importance and value of conservation. See GOL example and how to profit from the private sector's dissemination roll without any additional resources.
- bb) Regarding ownership, an excellent establishment of the Project on the field was perceived. Nevertheless, there is no evidence on the project's actual establishment among the national partners.
- cc) Consider using working tables for inter institutional participation and coordination in the field.
- dd) Evaluate how to work with tables on a tender scheme in the target areas. Build approaches that are integrated with areas of Democratic Governance and Disaster Risk reduction, to leverage UNDP actions on these areas.

4.4. Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

- a) Seizing institutions' capacities and enhancing their work synergies has enabled efficient inter institutional work processes and achieve better results.
- b) Biodiversity conservation in productive landscapes of Cerrado and Caatinga biomes has been possible through sustainable use and management of natural community resources.
- c) There are experiences that endorse the possibility of maintaining carbon stocks by avoiding changes in the use of land, improving agriculture including organic practices and agro ecological management on the community level, making an impact on biodiversity conservation
- d) The implementation of sustainable techniques for soil management contributes to avoid degradation, restore the agro ecosystem's services, improve the local communities' subsistence within environmentally, socially, economically and politically vulnerable territories
- e) The development and standardization of best practices foster local abilities improvement and supports the communities on generating environmental global benefits, which have been mostly recorded.
- f) For the effective involvement of cooperatives and CSOs, the program must accompany the implementation with appropriate intervention strategies according to the vision of each one.
- g) The recognition of the knowledge of the producers, of ancestral knowledge and their contact with ecosystems favors the processes of sensitization and awareness for good agro-ecological practices.
- h) Through the program some sectors participating in the projects, were visible as well as their problems and challenges (indigenous communities).

4.5. Lessons Learnt

- I. Being implemented for two decades, the program has had the opportunity to learn from its own experience as from experiences from other initiatives. SGP Brazil has accomplished strong and successful efforts to summon the organizations that participate to share their experiences and lessons learnt through the execution of their projects. These experiences will contribute to improve future project's design and implementation.
- II. SGP Brazil OP5 emphasized on the beneficiaries' participation throughout the project's design, development, implementation and monitoring phases. Planning and implementation have been excellent. SGP envisaged and incorporated a great diversity of stakeholders including CSOs, NGOs (local, regional and national). Communities were involved immediately in all OP5 stages.
- III. The bottom-up approach fosters project's achievements ownership from the beneficiaries and their execution compromise.
- IV. ISPN's role in orientation and coordination of the base organizations and its flexibility for being an execution NGO stand out.
- V. Women led organizations' participation promoted a gender assessment during the project's execution. This is expected to encourage a gender approach in the design of future projects.
- VI. Being the project's execution in hands of a renowned NGO as ISPN, contributed to diversify funding sources as well as UNDP credibility as an implementing agency. ISPN and Governments management enameled access to other funding sources.

- VII. Including a monitoring system from the beginning of execution contributed to achieving the expected results. The monitoring strategy, with operational meetings, management developed tools, field visits and permanent contact (telephone, e-mail) is remarkable.
- VIII. The experience of community work and experience on the field fostered trust and commitment links among the involved parties.
- IX. More clarity and quantification are required on some results in order to identify impacts on biodiversity, calculation of dollar per capita, per ton, per family, by income, economic return. It is a challenge to develop quantitative data, since it's a constant changing process. The efforts to calculate this data is a process for transmitting base organizations that permanent efforts are required.
- X. Not assuming greater commitments in terms of geographical expansion, considering scarce human and economic resources for giving same quality.

5. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference of the TE.

ANNEX 2: Agenda and itinerary of the Field Visit in Brazil.

ANNEX 3: List of Persons interviewed.

ANNEX 4: Summary of Field Visit.

ANNEX 5: List of documents reviewed.

ANNEX 6: Evaluation Questions Matrix.

ANNEX 7: Questionnaire used and summary of results.

ANNEX 8: Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form.

ANNEX 9: Report Clearance Form.

ANNEX 10: TE audit trail.